



# TOWN OF KITTERY

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Nancy Colbert Puff  
Town Manager

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## Library Committee Minutes 9-10-15

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Present: George Dow, Steve Workman, Tom Newbold, Kristina DeMarco  
Debra Kam, guest Architect Mike Lassel, and representatives of the School St./Dion Ave.  
neighborhood: Tom Gonnella, Stephen Foley, and Barbara McGaughey.

Staff: Nancy Colbert Puff,

Absent: Tom Emerson, Lee Perkins

The meeting convened at 9:00 pm.

### 1. Approval of the Minutes of 8/27/15.

Steve Workman moved to approve the draft minutes with corrections to typographic errors, and Tom Newbold seconded the motion. All voted in favor to approve.

### 2. Review of Site Plan Map; Discussion of Building Footprint, Size

The Committee welcomed visitors from the neighborhood to the meeting and introductions were made. Nancy asked the Committee to consider departing from its planned agenda to pursue one of the other questions it is charged to answer, concerning neighborhood impact, in light of the visitors present. All were in favor.

Stephen Foley began by referencing an email he had written<sup>1</sup> listing his concerns. The email is attached to these minutes. Among these included disruption of a quiet neighborhood, increased traffic, building size and lighting, and destruction of deer habitat. He made clear that he welcomed a new library, just not the current proposal.

Barbara McGaughey followed up on Steve's comments, noting the removal of woods for a fire lane, and an expected increase in pedestrian traffic. She felt her conversations with the RPL had been non-productive to date, and did not feel there was any transparency about budgets. She too supports the RPL, and likes it as it currently exists, though can understand how operating out of two buildings would be difficult for any manager. She wants the residents to be treated as part of the process, and that it has not felt good to be presented a proposal that seems like a done deal. She said the KCC and the RPL were both wonderful organizations, and maybe looking more closely at the Annex and the campus might be more conducive to working together. Tom N. responded that he was also

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen had addressed the email to the Town Manager, but the address was incorrect and did not reach her.

intrigued by the possible synergy between the two entities, and that it might optimize community support to merge the two into a campus setting.

Tom Gonnella asked about the activity at the Library now, and questioned whether it wise to consider such a large expenditure when people tend not to use libraries as much these days. Tom N. commented that if the activity is low now, part of the reason could be because the buildings are very outdated, and is not a 21<sup>st</sup> century library. Anecdotal evidence is that when communities make investments in updating their libraries, usage goes up. He thought we should be open to the positives that can come with investment, as traditional institutions that bring people together have been disappearing. The KCC has been successful in providing space where people do come together.

Barbara expressed concern about usage increasing and the impact to the neighborhood – even though only a Fire Lane is planned from School Street, usage may cause a change there – it would be a slippery slope. Tom N. commented that the size of the building is appropriate, that there is thinking behind it, and that the expected life span would be 50-75 years.

George agreed that there would be an increased use of sidewalks as walking will increase in the neighborhood. There will also be more cars on Goodsoe. He recalled the Mitchell School renovation project, and the concern that lighting would impact the abutters – the community had to be sensitive to light pollution. He said that at the last meeting, the Committee asked whether the existing proposal was in the right location to lend itself to a campus style of development, and is questioning whether it should be attached and/or relocated. The Committee was formed to look at the proposal on behalf of the community, and that there was an opportunity to bring this forward as a Town project, and Town library, managed by a Board of Directors but as a Town service provider.

Steve W. repeated the sentiment that the Committee has expressed great enthusiasm for the potential synergy between the Library and the KCC being located near each other. He noted there are questions, however, about the proposed location, and even whether it conforms to zoning. George confirmed that that has come up, and there may be issues there.

Tom G. noted again that in a world where everyone is on an ipad, he questions the amount of use the Library will have. George said that if he is voted on to the Library Board of Directors, he will work to make sure the Town is voting with sound judgement on these items.

Barbara commented that she has been in Town for 23 years, and that she used the Library much more when her kids were young. She has not seen any marketing materials from the RPL, no information about a capital campaign, etc. She thought there was a “communication gap,” and that more information needed to get out to the community. Her experience fundraising for the PTA and playgrounds in Town included the need for widespread marketing in order to gain support. Tom N. agreed that marketing is needed to build consensus, and needs to be done in a more sustained way.

Steve W. offered more on the history of the process – he said the KCC Board asked about fundraising, but were told no fundraising could take place prior to selecting a site. His experience was that this answer as “not intuitive,” as the KCC project was 25 years the making. His impression was that RPL references past public input sessions as if to “check the box” that it has been done, and now the focus is on other issues. He said the community as a whole has not been exposed to the proposal, and, unfortunately, now the conversation has become oppositional. Tom N. asked, “How do we move forward?” George responded that the committee’s work is doing just that. Mike spoke

of a visioning process that is happening. Barbara supported building consensus, rather than opposition. Debra asked the neighbors present what they thought could improve outreach. Barbara thought meeting with abutters would help, but that she felt a little better having listened to the discussion today. She said there was a perception that the RPL has not been forthcoming on questions concerning the budget, and what has been going on to date. Debra asked if a site walk might help (noting that the committee has not yet taken a site walk). Barbara cautioned that a site walk might give the wrong impression that the project was a “done deal,” moving forward.

Steve W. pointed out that there is a process issue that still needs to be addressed. There are at least three committees that have been involved with this, and each are doing their own work. The negotiations with the landowners are still on-going. This committee’s discussion has been positive, but he still wonders what the RPL is doing outside of the room. Barbara said she heard the RPL was pursuing a commercial loan, but no information about fundraising/a capital campaign is out there. George admitted that the process so far had been less than productive. The RPL has invested in Mike, and time has been spent on this.

Lee arrived towards the end of the meeting.

Nancy noted the meeting end time was approaching, and offered to bring materials on the Athletic Fields Master Plan to the next meeting. She suggested that since the committee has largely addressed the neighborhood impact question in this discussion, progress on the size/footprint question could be made at the next session.

George motioned to adjourn, and Tom N. seconded. All voted in favor. The next meeting is scheduled for Sept. 24th